



1000 CORPSE VIRTUAL PROTEST



PSNI, ARE YOU HARD ENOUGH?



ANARCHY! From Black Star 1981

# BLACK STAR ★



## ULSTER SAYS NO... ...to the DUP!

The meeja have been in overdrive in recent weeks over so-called threats to staff involved in random checks of some incoming freight against the backdrop of the Irish Sea border controversy.

Much of this seems however, to have been generated by the DUP press office in an attempt to help launch their five-point plan against the Northern Ireland protocol. In fairness, there's nothing like a bit of graffiti and rumours of death threats to give a bit of an edge to a political campaign. It certainly would have been an impressive bit of activism to shut down Irish Sea commerce with a spray can, and whilst loyalists in some quarters can mobilise support and take

action as and when they feel threatened, they're probably less likely to be willing patsies for the DUP.

That party's record of shafting protestant working class communities while claiming to represent them is really second to none. Of course, loyalists have been down that road before and aren't likely to be fooled again. When questioned on whether loyalists would fight the provisions contained in the NI protocol as a threat to the North's constitutional position, Billy Hutchinson of the PUP said 'who are you going to fight?' He knew full well that neither the Brexiteers in Britain nor the DUP give a flying fuck

about the economic ramifications of this new Europey, non-Europe, Brexit, not quite Brexit place we're all in.

Whatever best suits capitalism, home-grown, imported or otherwise will as always be the prevailing concern, and the usual pretence that the theatrics are all about the constitution is bollocks. Unionist politicians will accommodate themselves to whatever suits and serves their material interests at any given time. Like the far-right Eurosceptics in places like Poland and Hungary, they want to decry the 'liberalism' of the EU and at the same time milk it for every penny of subsidies they can get their hands on. They have also uncritically adopted every single piece of neo-liberal policy dreamt up by the EU, from the attacks on public service pensions to the deregulation and privatisation agenda, targeting everything from housing and transport, to health and local government. Even the unforgettable gravy train that was RHI came from the European Commission's 2009 Renewable Heating Directive. This was of course tailored by the Shinnars and DUP into the system, which they recently announced they will recompense recipients to the tune of 68 million quid for. Good news for over a thousand businesses (most of which were owned by supporters of our Orange and Green partners in government), but slightly less good news for the rest of us who have to foot the bill.

# What is Black Star?



*Black Star* is a new online anarchist news sheet that aims to provide irreverent and revolutionary news from the wee north. Written by members of *Organise!* here the focus is unashamedly local and working-class.

But the truth is *Black Star* isn't entirely new. The first issue was put together back when cut and paste meant actually cutting and pasting. Clunky typewriters, photocopied, cut out and pritt stuck in images, leterset headlines. The anarchist propagandists of 80's Ballymena were a dedicated bunch. What? Ballymena?

Yep, the very first *Black Star* was published in October 1981 by *Ballymena Anarchist Group*. It seems the second issue came out two and a half years later in February 1984! And while, this, the third issue is a whole 37 years later those involved with the original went on to become a component part of *Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups*, who kept putting out propaganda in the form of the *Antrim Alternative*. A short time later they became the specifically anarcho-syndicalist group *Organise!* with a publication of the same name.

So really we are reclaiming a wee bit of our own history in relaunching *Black Star*. We hope those involved in the original endeavour would approve.

The first issue contained articles on Anarchism as working-class politics, marriage and capitalism, the Labour Party (warning of sudden shows of 'militancy'), the threat posed to human survival by nuclear stockpiling, an attack on religion (no gods no masters), international news from Poland and El Salvador, and local troublemaker Jack White who became an Anarchist after encountering the CNT-AIT during the Spanish Revolution.

Number 2 had another take on Anarchism alongside articles on Workers Councils, anti-militarism, a poem from the Bard of Dunclug, an appeal for imprisoned anarcho-syndicalists in Spain, and a piece on local radical and atheist Ida White.

Just to give yez a wee taste we are reprinting their article 'Anarchy!' from issue 1

*Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough', Byrne's new PSNI recruitment drive.*



Months have passed since the Black Lives Matter protests took place in Derry and Belfast and the challenge to the fines imposed by the cops has still to be resolved. In the intervening months the PSNI under Simon 'balls out' Byrne has not had a great lockdown. It's the old story - arresting them uns and/or not arresting them uns.

## Pandemic: less pay, more precarity, more poverty!

That the poorest have suffered the most during the pandemic comes as no surprise to *Black Star*. Even before Coronavirus put in an appearance, 1 in 5 were living in poverty across the UK. That was 14.5 million people! Since the pandemic and the restrictions associated with it this has only got worse.

Part-time and low-paid workers in sectors like hospitality, leisure and construction have borne the brunt. Many have been laid off - lacking the luxury of being able to work from home. Over 80% of workers in hospitality and leisure are in even more dire poverty than before. Job losses, reduced hours, pay cuts have all been implemented under the shadow of lockdowns and other restrictions.

Redundancies in Northern Ireland have hit a 10 year high and that isn't going to get better any time soon. Meanwhile over a million low paid and precarious workers are regularly skipping meals! Over two-thirds of low paid full-time workers have saw their pay slashed during the pandemic, one third have been unable to pay their bills, 20% have been unable to heat their homes and 20% are behind with their rent or mortgage payments. It's time we scrapped the virus of capitalism!

Northern Anarchist News from *Organise!*



# 1000 Corpse Virtual Protest



*Black Star* can exclusively report that deceased voters across the wee north are organising a 'Virtual 1,000 Corpse Protest' against a planned 'purge' of the Northern Ireland electoral register.

Incensed at what they call the denial of their democratic rights, the Democratic Undead Protest Coalition (a new protest group for deceased voters) expect the protest to be an overwhelming success.

Concerns about the electoral register 'purge' have been dismissed by leading Unionists, however the group are still anticipating the support of the late Unionist stalwart Jeremiah Mander.

A DUPC spokesbody told us:

'We already have the support of Sinn Fein in opposing this assault on democracy.'

Michelle O'Neill regards these plans as 'concerning' stating 'tens of thousands' could lose their vote.

This is of obvious concern to the protest organisers who believe the purge will disproportionately impact on their demographic's rights, a group which until recently has enjoyed a privileged status across the political spectrum.

A Medium told us one of their best undead friends complained:

'Our names are on parks, banners, gable walls and now we are going to be deprived the most basic of our democratic rights, it's scandalous.'

Sinn Fein described the Electoral Office's plan to clear the register between July and December of this year as:

'a blatant attempt to suppress the voice of citizens in next year's historic Assembly

election.'

In turn the NIO gave a clear example of it's disregard for the rights of dead voters stating:

'people cannot remain on the NI register indefinitely.'

When asked if the dead would turn out for the protest in sufficient numbers organisers stated:

'if the dead can turn out to vote they can certainly turn out to protest. We are confident we can defeat this draconian attack on our inalienable rights as citizens.'

No-one involved in the protest nor from Sinn Fein were available for comment on a controversial study which claims that the undead disproportionately vote for Sinn Fein. The DUPC stated that while it welcomed the political support of Sinn Fein that it was not in any way connected to the party.

'any lack of support from any political party for our campaign is sheer hypocrisy.'

## Abortion Rights Under Attack - Get On the Streets!

The DUP have screamed discrimination while firing an emotionally laden first salvo in their battle against decriminalised abortion provision in the North. Paul Givan has tabled a Private Member's Bill at Stormont targeting a provision within the new abortion regulations that allows terminations up to birth in cases of serious non-fatal disability. Riding roughshod over the ability of those carrying the pregnancy to decide whether to have an abortion or not, Givan has enlisted the help of disability rights campaigners in a cynical move that is being dressed up as defence of the defenceless. As if the DUP ever gave a flying fuck about discrimination.

Decades of campaigning recently forced the decriminalisation of abortion here. Thousands upon thousands were compelled to travel to England or further afield to obtain abortions, others had

dangerous back street abortions performed. All while the pious washed their hands, satisfied that it wasn't happening on their scared little patch of soil.

Despite this victory, provision has been 'implemented' in such a way that abortion is still being exported, in the midst of lockdowns and all the other constraints imposed during this pandemic.

This is an attack on a significant victory which allows people make their own informed decisions on what is best for them. It is an attack on the right to chose, spearheaded by a DUP member but with support at Stormont running much deeper. Lets not kid ourselves, this includes the Shinnars. Back in June 2020 they were mis-reported as opposing a

DUP proposal to amend the legislation on the same grounds. They were clearly not in opposition to the spirit of what the DUP were proposing. Putting forward an amendment that would effectively produce the same outcome they also want to undermine the right to chose by stealth. The DUP, Sinn Fein and others up on the hill are playing a game that claims callousness towards the disabled, while playing out their all too real callousness, inhumanity, and misogyny against those who would chose an abortion. Of course Sinn Fein dress it up as not wanting the Brits to decide (but being happy enough to let them do so) while one Unionist has actually stated 'we are responsible for reflecting our society's values in this area, not Great Britain'.

Let us not be in any doubt, this is only a first salvo, and one that appeals to the sentiment of 'our' politicians at Stormont. To the extent that it may well be successful. The response? Well it isn't more lobbying. It's 'Get on the streets!'

## Meanwhile in Ballymena...



Randox CEO Peter FitzGerald

The local press have been trumpeting the success of Antrim employer, Randox, whose laboratories in and around Crumlin have processed their 10 millionth sample test for COVID-19.

The Free State company founded and owned by Dr Peter FitzGerald was the unwelcome recipient of a Channel 4 Dispatches programme investigating its procurement of government contracts and its health and safety regime. The anti-trade union employer, which has received UK government contracts of around half a billion, is based in the old British army barracks at Massareene.

Former workers speak of some of the shite they had to put up with when employed there:

‘The major issue working in this company is the sheer incompetence of management. Project management within R&D at Randox is built on a culture of fear of the SMT and CEO. Managers make few decisions for fear of looking bad in front of the SMT who run the company in an authoritarian, almost Stalinist manner... The workday at Randox...commences at 08:40 and finishes at 17:20. These extra 40 mins over the standard 9-5 is to cover the unpaid breaks the company “kindly” let its staff have during the day. Reception and HR monitor your working hours constantly through the clocking system... Company benefits... Sick pay, none. Flexi time, at managers’ discretion so varies both inter and intra departmentally. If you do wish to take flexi this must be either two hours at the start or end of the working day and must be re-cooped within the monthly pay period or your salary will be docked accordingly. Holiday, the majority of holiday days are fixed with no option to negotiate leaving you with only 9 or so days of your own choice. Pension, poor bare minimum of what is legally acceptable. Maternity/paternity, statutory minimum. All in all company benefits can be described as Dickensian’.

Of course, this is what Northern Ireland’s politicians mean when they talk about the high-quality employment of biotech industries. Randox are a perfect example of the type of employers they love, they can be sold to unionists as examples of the benefits to be gained through the union and to nationalists as an example of the new all-Ireland economy of the future, either way it is workers who get shafted as usual.

## ANARCHY!



### IS THIS HOW ANARCHISTS SEEM TO YOU?

Most people see Anarchists as mad bombers bent on the total destruction of everything. Anarchy has come to mean chaos when in fact it comes from the Greek “an-archos” which means “without rulers” and Anarchists believe in co-operation.

This paper has been produced by a small group of Anarchists in Ballymena to try and propagate Anarchist ideas among working people. There will be content on the world in general and Ballymena in particular.

### What We Stand For:

1) The whole world now is based on inequality, coercion and violence. We believe in removing all hierarchical relationships from life and building a world based on freedom, equality and cooperation.

Northern Anarchist News from Organise!

2) The working-class are the majority class in the world and the producers of the world’s wealth. Thus they should receive the full fruits of their labour and control their own destiny. They must do this themselves, without relying on leaders or vanguard parties, through direct democracy in the workplace and neighbourhood.

3) There can be no so-called “transitional” period for this. No government can represent the interests of anyone but itself and thus the working-class must seize power itself immediately. The results of Lenin’s policies in Russia show that Marxist-Leninism is totally redundant and should be consigned to the dustbin of history.

4) The working-class will not be given freedom and so they will have to take it. This will lead to violence from the ruling class who will try to hang on to their positions of power. To counter this the working-class will have to defend themselves by meeting the sword with the sword.

From *Black Star* #1 October 1981.

